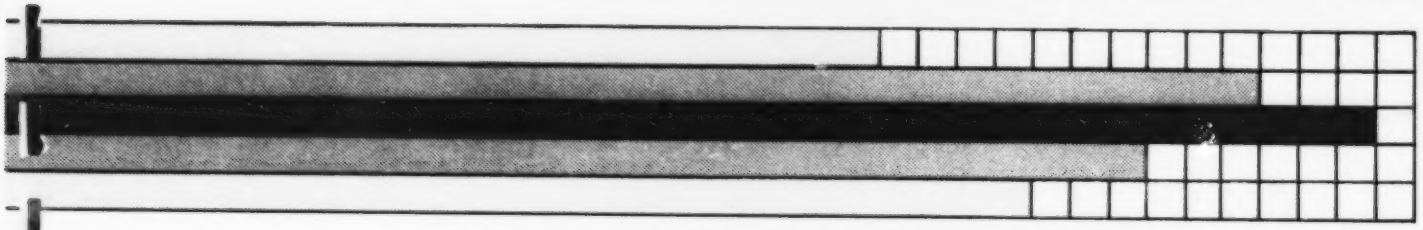
Report on the Planned Lot Residential (RPL) Land Use District



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents population and development density statistics and describes demographic and property characteristics for the Planned Lot Residential (RPL) Land Use District. The RPL District is intended primarily for single detached housing, providing greater flexibility of site design and site size on a planned basis. This district was first implemented on July 3, 1980 and is provided for in Section 130 of the Edmonton Land Use Bylaw No. 5996.

The RPL District was popular with developers and builders during 1981 and 1982 when a total of 1,411 dwelling units were constructed representing 24% of all single detached and semi-detached dwelling unit starts in the city. As of May 1983 there were 2,810 RPL districted tax parcels, 1,924 of which were developed.

The supply of vacant RPL districted lots exceeded demand on an annual basis from 1977 to 1982 when 1,013 vacant lots were available. In addition, there were approximately 1,875 potential RPL districted lots for which Municipal Planning Commission approval had been received but for which the plans of subdivision were not legally registered. During the first half of 1984 there have been applications to redistrict approximately 610 lots from RPL to the Single Detached Residential (RF1) Land Use District.

The RPL Land Use District is not exclusively a 'small lot' district. The average area of a developed RPL districted tax parcel (356 m^2) is only 4 m^2 less than the minimum allowable lot area for an RF1 districted parcel and is greater than many single detached dwelling lots in older neighbourhoods of the city.

Development density in the RPL District, as measured by dwellings per net hectare, is 27.3 du/ha. This is much lower than the maximum allowable density for this district (42 du/ha) but approximates the maximum potential density of the RF1 District. The population density in the RPL District, as measured by persons per occupied dwelling unit (PPDU), is 3.04 in Area Structure Plan areas and 2.65 in Mature Suburban areas for single detached dwellings. Comparable density scores for the RF1 District, the traditional single detached district, are 3.46 and 3.21 PPDU. While there are more dwelling units per net area in the RPL District as compared with the RF1 Land Use District, there are fewer persons per dwelling unit.

Eighty-two percent of the RPL population is aged 34 or less and 53% is from 18 to 34 years old. Also, many households consist of young couples and couples with young children. Taken together these factors indicate that many households may be in the early stages of the family formation cycle. Given this demographic profile, the population density of the RPL District is expected to increase in future.

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1. STUDY OUTLINE

The 'Report on Residential Population Densities in Edmonton' was prepared in May 1983. Average household size and type statistics are reported for dwellings classified by dwelling unit type and size, land use district and location in the city. These data are used to project population and household composition in new areas of the city and to assess the impact of infill development and redevelopment in built up areas of the city. That report did not include the Planned Lot Residential (RPL) District because of the short time period between the implementation of this new land use district and the effective date of the data used in the 'Population Densities' report. The purpose of this second report is to provide population and development density information for the RPL District and to further investigate the demographic and property characteristics of this land use district.

PRISM (Planning Research Information System) was used to retrieve and match all registered tax parcels with an RPL Land Use District designation from the 1983 property assessment data base with all persons resident on those properties from the 1983 Civic Census data file. This retrieval excluded all lands for which the RPL designation had been approved but the subsequent registration of the plan of subdivision had not been completed (i.e., the designated RPL areas do not conform with legally registered property boundaries). The effective date of the PRISM data file is May 1983.

Data are provided for the RPL District as a whole, as well as distinguishing between Area Structure Plan (ASP) and Mature Suburban areas.[1] RPL districted parcels are located in the Mill Woods, West Jasper Place, Kaskitayo, Lake District and Clareview ASP areas and the Dovercourt and Ottewell Mature Suburban areas. In addition, data for six RPL development areas, selected to highlight the diverse characteristics in this often assumed homogeneous district, are also reported. Map 1.1 identifies the location of RPL development areas and distinguishes between ASP and Mature Suburban areas.

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1 As defined in the 'Population Densities' report, Mature Suburban areas were principally developed between 1951 and 1971 and Area Structure Plan areas have developed since 1971.

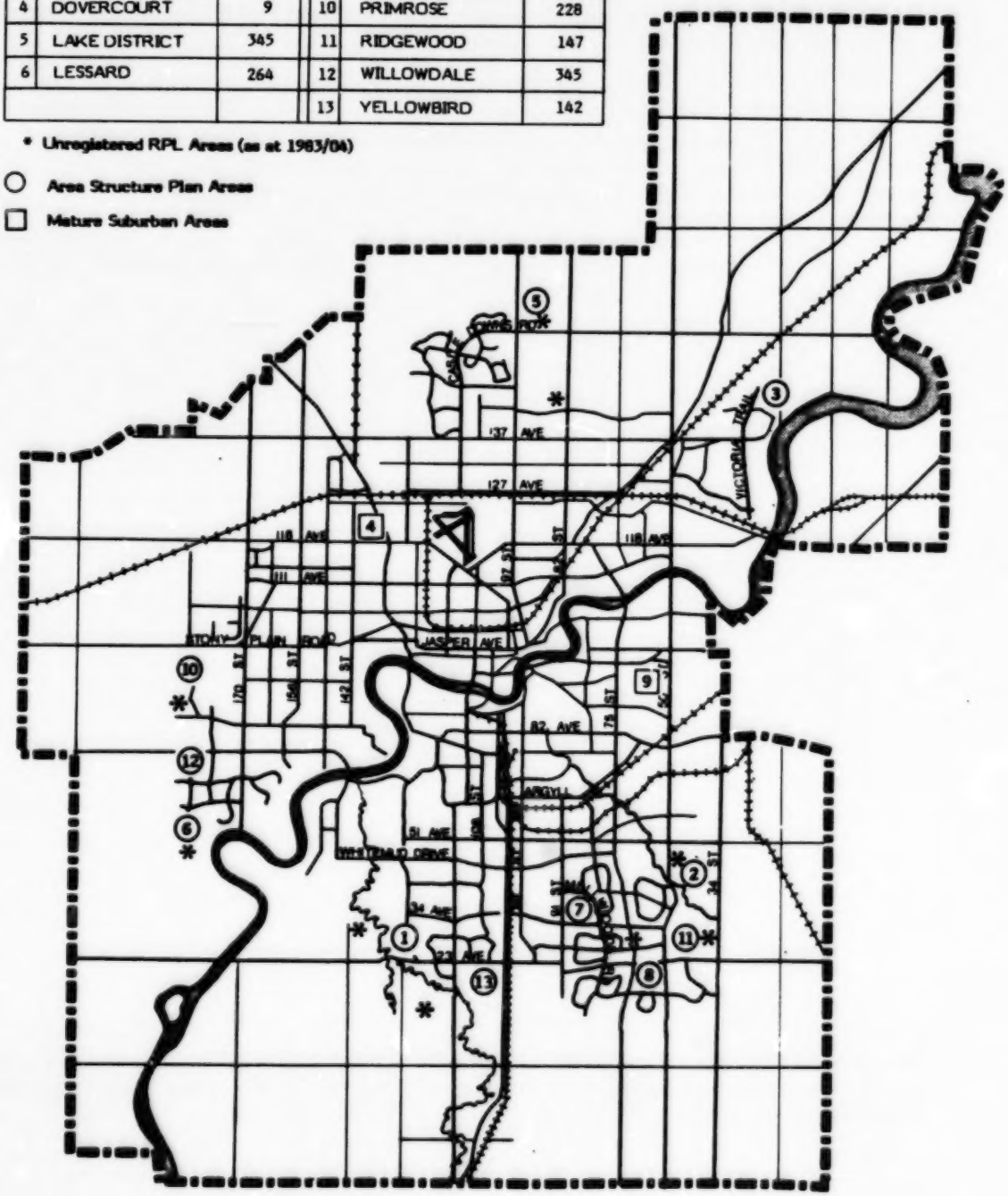
MAP 1.1 LOCATION OF RPL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

#	AREA	LOTS	#	AREA	LOTS
1	BLUE QUILL	64	7	MILLBOURNE	49
2	BURNEWOOD	945	8	MILLHURST	97
3	CLAREVIEW	19	9	OTTEWELL	156
4	DOVERCOURT	9	10	PRIMROSE	228
5	LAKE DISTRICT	345	11	RIDGEWOOD	147
6	LESSARD	264	12	WILLOWDALE	345
			13	YELLOWBIRD	142

* Unregistered RPL Areas (as at 1983/04)

○ Area Structure Plan Areas

□ Mature Suburban Areas



2. HISTORY OF THE PLANNED LOT RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DISTRICT

The question of affordability of housing, or the lack of affordability, is a major concern of the development and housing industries and governments alike. The development industry has suggested changes in the development process including a move towards smaller residential lots. The housing industry has promoted alternatives to apartments including innovative housing forms and smaller homes. Governments have searched for means to encourage innovation and where appropriate, to increase the flexibility of development and construction regulations. A number of sanctioned experiments in reduced lot sizes, innovative housing design and the integration of site and dwelling unit were undertaken. These experiments proved to be a valuable learning process for both industry and government.

In Edmonton, a few experimental residential projects were developed with the objective of implementing a zero-lot-line concept for single family dwellings. Of particular note are two housing projects, one in the Millbourne neighbourhood of Mill Woods started in 1976 and the other, started in 1977, in the Ottewell neighbourhood. These projects were not permitted under the then existing Zoning Bylaw #2135; however, they were constructed with provincial ministerial approval.

The Planning Department began a comprehensive review of the Zoning Bylaw in 1978 as part of the process for preparing a new Land Use Bylaw. It was during this process that an amendment to the Bylaw was suggested to accommodate innovative projects and to remove the necessity of ministerial approval. Perceived benefits of innovative projects included provision of alternative housing forms, more efficient use of land, roadways, and services (including an increased number of lots per unit area and narrower roadways) and comprehensively planned development whereby both lots and dwelling units are designed at the same time. Experience gained from local experiments and recognition of the potential benefits resulted in this suggestion being implemented.

While the development industry requested small lots be allowed in traditional single family dwellings areas, the Planning Department proposed that a new land use district be created to accommodate innovative housing and comprehensively planned development. In addition, the new land use district would allow easy monitoring of a relatively new form of development.

The first draft of the proposed Land Use Bylaw in 1979 included a Small Lot Residential (RSL) Land Use District in which no "permitted uses" were assigned and small lot single detached and semi-detached lots were conditionally permitted subject to the approval of the Municipal Planning Commission[2]. This proposal was considered to be overly restrictive and was revised to include row housing of up to four units in a horizontal structure.

In the public participation phase of the Land Use Bylaw preparation process, submissions were received from a number of sources including the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada (HUDAC). These submissions assisted the further refinement of the concept and regulations for the proposed land use district[3].

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2 Proposed Residential Component, Planning Department, 1979.

3 Comments Regarding Amendments Proposed by the Planning Department to the Land Use Bylaw, Planning Department, March 5, 1980.

The changes as a result of this process were quite significant. First, the focus of the district was changed from that of a small lot area to that of a comprehensively planned area of innovative housing which may or may not be on small lots. This change initiated the renaming of the proposed district to the Planned Lot Residential (RPL) Land Use District. Second, the restrictiveness was lessened to allow single detached dwellings as a permitted use and semi-detached and four unit row housing structures as discretionary uses. This change resulted in the inclusion of more detailed development regulations but removed the requirement for all RPL development to obtain approval from the Municipal Planning Commission.

The RPL Land Use District was created with the adoption of the present City of Edmonton Land Use Bylaw #5996 on July 3, 1980. Previously developed projects with zero-lot-line characteristics and some narrow lot projects were assigned an RPL designation. Since approval of the Bylaw there have been amendments to RPL regulations but they have not altered the intent of the RPL Land Use District. The amendments were to clarify separation space, garage, yard and simultaneous development application regulations[4]. Recently, limited group homes became the second permitted use in this district and residential sales centre was added to the list of discretionary uses[5].

The Planned Lot Residential Land Use District is a district primarily for single detached housing, providing greater flexibility of site design and site size on a planned basis. However, semi-detached housing, up to four units of row housing and other residential related uses may be approved at the discretion of the Development Officer. The maximum height of structures is limited to 10 m (32.8 feet) or 2½ storeys. For all applications, at least 50% of dwellings are to be single detached and not more than 25% of dwellings may be row housing dwellings. Development is permitted to a maximum of 42 dwellings per hectare[6].

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4 Bylaw to Amend Edmonton Land Use Bylaw #5996, Bylaw #6626 (November 10, 1981).

5 Amending Bylaws #7229 (September 27, 1983) and #7322 (September 10, 1983).

6 Refer to Appendix A for excerpts from Bylaw #5996.

3. POPULATION DENSITY AND HOUSEHOLD PROFILES

This section presents statistics on household size and type for dwelling units in the RPL Land Use District (Section 3.1). These statistics are then compared with those for other residential districts (Section 3.2).

3.1 RPL Population Density and Household Profiles

The predominant housing type in the RPL Land Use District is the single detached dwelling. In Area Structure Plan (ASP) areas, 99% of RPL dwellings are single detached while the remaining 1% are semi-detached. In Mature Suburban areas, all RPL dwellings are single detached. This predominance reflects the intent of the RPL Land Use District as being primarily for single detached dwellings with semi-detached and row housing dwellings as discretionary uses.

The average number of persons per dwelling unit (PPDU) in the RPL district, by area, dwelling type and number of bedrooms is shown in Table 3.1.1. The average household size for single detached and semi-detached units on RPL lots in ASP areas is 3.04 and 3.20 PPDU respectively. In Mature Suburban areas, the average is only 2.65 PPDU.

The majority of RPL dwellings have three bedrooms. In ASP areas, 71% of single detached dwellings have three bedrooms, 25% are two bedroom units and 4% are either one or four bedroom units. In Mature Suburban areas the situation is similar with 83% of RPL dwellings having three bedrooms while 12% are two bedroom units and 5% are four bedroom units.

A profile of household types in ASP and Mature Suburban areas is shown in Table 3.1.2. Two household types are predominant representing 80.4% of all households. They are adult pairs (34.9%) and adult pairs with children (45.5%). Corresponding statistics are nearly identical for ASP areas (where most RPL housing is situated). In Mature Suburban RPL housing, however, the strong representation of adult pairs (33.7%) and adult pairs with children (33.7%) is balanced against a comparatively high proportion of single adult households (16.0%).

Of all RPL households, 55% include children and 45% are adult only households. Here again there are differences between RPL households in ASP areas, where 56% include children, and those in Mature Suburban areas where only 44% include children.

In general, RPL housing is most attractive to adult couples and adult couples with children in both the ASP and Mature Suburban areas. RPL housing in Mature Suburban areas has more single adult households and fewer households with children than does RPL housing in ASP areas. This accounts for the substantial difference in average household size between the two areas.

3.2 Comparison of RPL With Other Residential Land Use Districts

The population density and household type profile of the Planned Lot Residential (RPL) District is compared with those of the Single Detached (RF1), Semi-detached (RF4) and Row Housing (RF5) Districts because each of these housing types is either a permitted or a discretionary land use in the RPL district.

Average household size statistics, by area, dwelling unit type and number of bedrooms for the RPL, RF1, RF4 and RF5 Districts are presented in Table 3.2.1. In ASP areas, the average household size for the RPL single detached dwellings (3.04 PPDU) is considerably

TABLE 3.1.1 AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT IN THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS, DWELLING UNIT TYPE AND BY AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AND MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS

		NUMBER OF BEDROOMS				All
		One	Two	Three	Four	Units
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AREAS						
Single Detached Dwelling	PPDU	2.00	2.65	3.14	4.00	3.04
	(Units)	(4)	(358)	(994)	(47)	(1 403)
Semi-detached Dwelling	PPDU	-	-	3.05	6.00	3.20
	(Units)			(19)	(1)	(20)
MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS						
Single Detached Dwelling	PPDU	-	2.21	2.68	3.25	2.65
	(Units)		(19)	(136)	(8)	(163)

TABLE 3.1.2 HOUSEHOLD TYPE PROFILE OF THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT BY DWELLING UNIT TYPE AND BY AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AND MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS

HOUSEHOLD TYPE		AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AREAS Single Detached Dwelling	AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AREAS Semi-detached Dwelling	MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS Single Detached Dwelling	TOTAL
Single Adult	#	47	1	26	74
	(%)	(3.3)	(5.0)	(16.0)	(4.7)
Adult Pair	#	495	7	52	554
	(%)	(35.3)	(35.0)	(31.9)	(34.9)
Adult Group	#	73	1	14	88
	(%)	(5.2)	(5.0)	(8.6)	(5.5)
Single Adult With Children	#	43	-	6	49
	(%)	(3.1)		(3.7)	(3.1)
Adult Pair With Children	#	658	8	55	721
	(%)	(46.9)	(40.0)	(33.7)	(45.5)
Adult Group With Children	#	87	3	10	100
	(%)	(6.2)	(15.0)	(6.1)	(6.3)
TOTAL	#	1 403	20	163	1 586
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

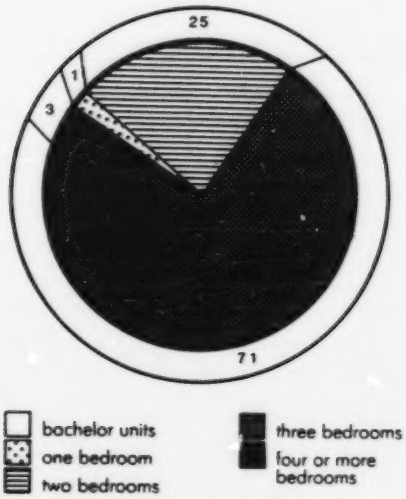
FIGURE 3.1.1

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT IN THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT (Single Detached Dwellings)

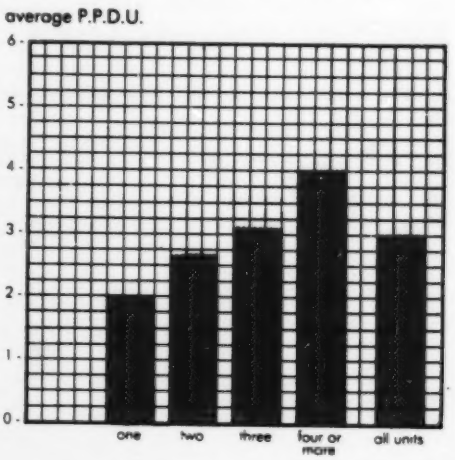
area structure plan areas

Land Use District	Average Persons Per Dwelling Unit
RPL	3.04

Mix of Dwelling Units
by Number of Bedrooms (in percent)



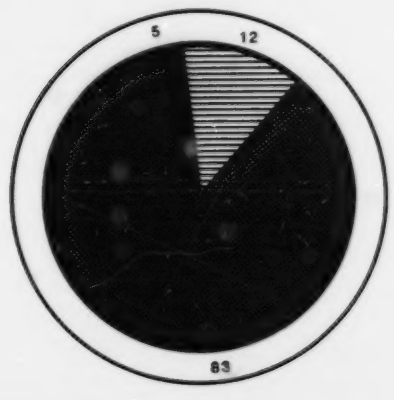
Average Persons Per Dwelling Unit
by Number of Bedrooms and for All Units



mature suburban areas

Land Use District	Average Persons Per Dwelling Unit
RPL	2.65

Mix of Dwelling Units
by Number of Bedrooms (in percent)



Average Persons Per Dwelling Unit
by Number of Bedrooms and for All Units

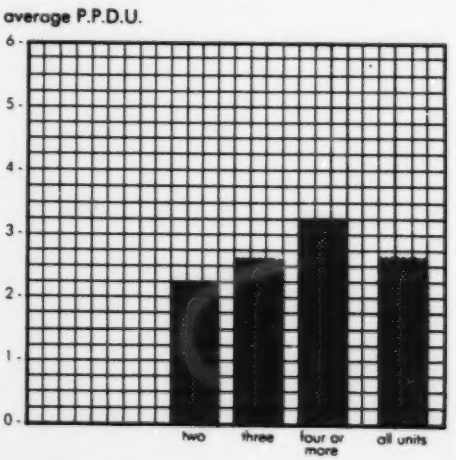


FIGURE 3.1.2 **HOUSEHOLD TYPE PROFILE OF THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT**
(Single Detached Dwellings)

area legend	household types						households
	single adult	adult pair	adult group	single adult with children	adult pair with children	adult group with children	
Area Structure Plan Areas	3%	35%	5%	3%	47%	6%	1403
Mature Suburban Areas	16%	32%	9%	4%	34%	6%	163

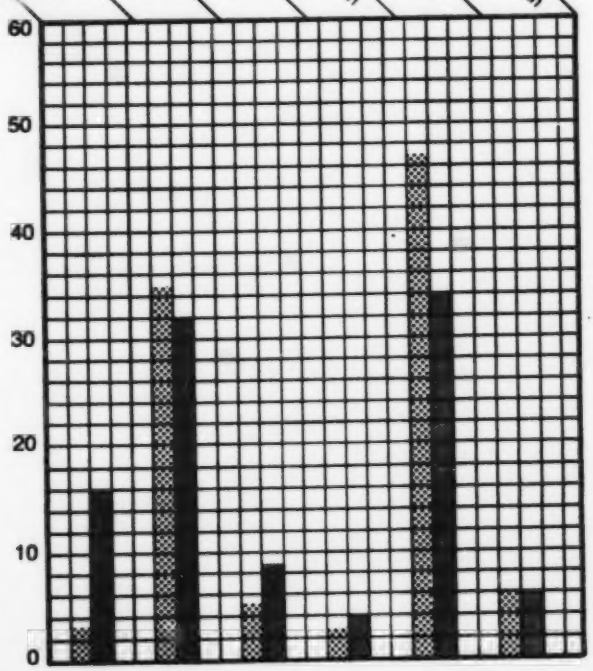


TABLE 3.2.1 COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING UNIT IN THE RPL DISTRICT WITH THE RF1, RF4 AND RF5 LAND USE DISTRICTS

		NUMBER OF BEDROOMS				ALL UNITS
		One	Two	Three	Four	
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AREAS						
Single Detached Dwelling	RPL	2.00	2.65	3.14	4.00	3.04
	RF1	-	2.62	3.36	4.08	3.46
Semi-detached Dwelling	RPL	-	-	3.05	6.00	3.20
	RF4	-	2.63	3.37	4.30	3.32
Row Housing	RF5	1.39	2.37	2.98	3.94	2.98
MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS						
Single Detached Dwelling	RPL	-	2.21	2.68	3.25	2.65
	RF1	1.55	2.31	3.18	3.82	3.21

TABLE 3.2.2 COMPARISON OF THE HOUSEHOLD TYPE PROFILE FOR THE RPL DISTRICT WITH THE RF1, RF4 AND RF5 LAND USE DISTRICTS

		HOUSEHOLD TYPE						TOTAL CASES
		Single Adult	Adult Pair	Adult Group	Single Adult With Children	Adult Pair With Children	Adult Group With Children	
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN AREAS								
Single Detached	RPL	3%	36%	5%	3%	47%	6%	1 403
	RF1	3%	24%	7%	1%	55%	10%	7 364
Semi-detached	RPL	5%	35%	5%	0%	40%	15%	20
	RF4	8%	23%	8%	5%	46%	10%	468
Row Housing	RF5	11%	26%	9%	10%	39%	5%	3 071
MATURE SUBURBAN AREAS								
Single Detached	RPL	16%	32%	8%	4%	34%	6%	163
	RF1	8%	30%	18%	2%	32%	10%	8 064

lower than the 3.46 PPDU reported for RF1 single detached dwellings. ASP area semi-detached RPL units have an average household size of 3.20 PPDU while RF4 units average 3.32 PPDU. The average household size for RPL single detached units in ASP areas is only marginally greater than that reported for RF5 row housing (2.98 PPDU) in the same area.

In Mature Suburban areas, the average household size for RPL units (2.65 PPDU) is considerably lower than for RF1 single detached dwellings (3.21 PPDU).

The assessment of RPL development as housing for small households is reinforced by the household type profiles shown on Table 3.2.2. In Mature Suburban areas, the RPL household profile differs from that of RF1 housing primarily in having a higher proportion of single adult households and a lower proportion of larger adult group households. In ASP areas, the sizable difference in average household size between RPL housing and comparable housing in RF1 and RF4 districts is attributable to the proportions of adult pairs versus adult pairs with children. In either case, the comparatively high number of one person households (Mature Suburbs) and two person households (ASP areas) results in average households sizes smaller than those reported for neighbouring RF1 and RF4 development.

From another perspective, a key difference in household size in ASP areas is the proportion of households with children in RPL, RF1 and RF4 housing. Households in RF1 single detached dwellings include children 66% of the time while 61% of RF4 semi detached unit households include children. This compares with 56% of RPL single detached and 55% of RPL semi detached dwelling households which include children. There is no corresponding difference between RPL and RF1 housing in the Mature Suburban areas where, in both cases, 44% of households include children.

Comparison of the household type profile of RF5 row housing and RPL housing in ASP areas suggests that these housing types play different roles in the housing market. Row housing is noticeably higher in single adult, single adult with children and adult group households. RPL households are more likely to be adult pairs and adult pairs with children (i.e., young couples and young couples with children). Much of the difference can be attributed to the greater role of row housing in the rental housing, including public housing, market. Despite the underlying difference in household type profiles, RPL and row housing in ASP areas have been equally attractive to households with children. In row housing 54% of households have children while a similar 56% of RPL households include children.

In summary, comparison of average household size statistics for RPL housing against those for single and semi-detached dwellings in RF1 and RF4 Land Use Districts show that, on average, RPL dwelling households are smaller. In ASP areas, RPL households are, on the average, larger than in RF5 row housing. In ASP areas, most of these differences are due to the relative numbers of households with children in single and semi-detached dwellings, and the high proportion of single adults with and without children in RF5 row housing. In the Mature Suburbs, the high proportion of single adult households and the low proportion of adult group households in RPL housing account for much of the difference in average household size.

One feature of the household type profile of RPL housing that begs further investigation is the relative abundance, in ASP areas, of adult pair households. Some possible implications of this situation are considered, within the context of information from other sections of this report, in Section 5.

4. PROPERTY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Section 3 discussed persons per dwelling unit and household size and type characteristics for the RPL District. This section reports further on demographic characteristics, and investigates property characteristics for the district as a whole, for each Area Structure Plan and Mature Suburban area (Section 4.1) and for specific development areas (Section 4.2).

4.1 RPL Property and Demographic Characteristics

There were 2,810 assessed tax parcels[7] districted RPL accounting for 102.9 hectares as of May 1983 (Table 4.1.1). RPL districted parcels are located in five Area Structure Plan areas[8] and in two Mature Suburban areas (Dovercourt and Ottewell). The greatest concentrations (74%) of these parcels are located in Mill Woods and West Jasper Place ASPs. In terms of land use, 98.6% of the 1,924 developed tax parcels have single detached dwellings located on them while the remainder host semi-detached dwellings. Row housing, a discretionary use in this district, has not been constructed. Thirty-four percent of RPL districted tax parcels are undeveloped.

98.5% of these RPL tax parcels are privately-owned and the remaining 1.5% are owned by the City of Edmonton. Those 43 City-owned residential parcels are undeveloped; 14 parcels are located in West Jasper Place and 29 in Mill Woods[9].

Lot area, a minimum for which is specified in the Land Use Bylaw for most residential land use districts[10], is not regulated for the Planned Lot Residential District. However, 38% of RPL districted tax parcels exceed the minimum lot area (360 m^2) for the RF1 Land Use District, the traditional single family detached dwelling district, despite the widely held impression of the RPL District as a small lot district. In fact, the average lot size of a developed single detached parcel in the RPL District is 356 m^2, and 74% of all RPL districted tax parcels have a lot area greater than 300 m^2. There are single detached dwellings located on lots in the RF4 Semi-detached District which were initially intended for semi-detached dwellings, and there are numerous residential lots in the built-up areas of the city with 33 foot frontages and hence a lot area of less than that presently required for single detached dwellings[11]. Hence the lot area of typical RPL districted parcels is not significantly different from the lot area of many of the existing parcels in other residential land use districts.

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7 33 utility lots and 3 large undeveloped tax parcels also districted RPL accounting for 9.8 ha are excluded from these data to focus the discussion on residential tax parcels.

8 There are no RPL parcels in Castle Downs while there are RPL districted but unregistered parcels in Riverbend. Throughout ASP areas there are approximately 1,875 unregistered but RPL districted potential lots.

9 The City also owns 32 utility lots and 2 large undeveloped tax parcels districted RPL.

10 Refer to Appendix C for minimum lot areas as specified in the Bylaw.

11 A 33 foot by 100 foot lot has an area of approximately 307 m^2.

TABLE 4.1.1

SELECTED PROPERTY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT

Selected Characteristics		West Jasper Place	Kaskitayo	Lake District	Mill Woods	Clareview	Dovercourt	Ottewell	All RPL Parcels
Number of Tax Parcels	#	837	206	345	1,238	19	9	156	2,810
Land Area of Tax Parcels	ha	32.2	8.1	13.0	44.1	0.5	0.3	5.2	102.9
Land Use:									
Single Detached	#	519	74	172	950	18	9	156	1,898
	ha	19.2	2.9	7.0	32.5	0.5	0.3	5.2	67.6
Semi-Detached	#	4	20	-	2	-	-	-	26
	ha	0.1	0.7	-	*	-	-	-	0.8
Undeveloped Land	#	314	112	173	286	1	-	-	886
	ha	12.9	4.5	6.0	10.9	*	-	-	34.3
City-Owned Tax Parcels	#	14	-	-	29	-	-	-	43
	ha	0.6	-	-	1.2	-	-	-	1.8
Average Tax Parcel Size									
Single Detached	m2	369	388	405	343	270	308	336	356
Semi-Detached	m2	347	355	-	235	-	-	-	345
Undeveloped	m2	412	400	350	382	240	-	-	389
Proportion of Tax Parcels Greater than 360m2	%	46.5	46.6	41.7	31.8	15.8	11.1	31.4	38.3
Number of Dwellings per Net Hectare[1]		26.0	25.6	26.5	28.4	37.3	32.5	29.8	27.3
Subdivision Activity									
Start Year		1977	1978	1980	1976	1981	1981	1977	1976
Peak Year		1982	1982	1982	1981	1981	1981	1977	1981
Construction Activity									
Start Year		1977	1979	1981	1976	1982	1982	1976	1976
Peak Year		1982	1979	1982	1981	1982	1982	1977	1981
Average Sale Price Single Detached[2]	$	75,000	108,900	75,400	72,000	72,500	75,700	72,000	74,450
Number of Occupied Dwellings	#	438	54	133	788	10	9	154	1,586
Number of Unoccupied Dwellings	#	85	40	39	164	8	-	2	338
Proportion of Rental Households	%	2.5	11.1	0.0	4.1	0.0	11.1	9.1	4.0
Dwelling Size									
One Bedroom	%	0.4	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Two Bedroom	%	25.8	1.9	26.3	26.5	0.0	22.2	11.0	23.8
Three Bedroom	%	69.9	81.5	71.5	70.8	100.0	77.8	83.8	72.4
Four Bedroom	%	3.9	16.6	0.7	2.7	0.0	0.0	5.2	3.5
Number of Persons	#	1,357	169	402	2,367	36	17	415	4,763
Proportion of Persons Aged 14 or Less	%	28.7	20.7	28.6	28.3	33.3	0.0	22.2	27.6
Proportion of Persons Aged 55 or More	%	3.2	7.7	2.5	2.1	0.0	0.0	6.0	3.0
Proportion of Households with Children	%	59.3	44.4	57.2	54.7	80.0	0.0	46.1	54.9
Average Number of Persons per Dwelling Unit[3]		3.10	3.13	3.02	3.00	3.60	1.90	2.69	3.00

Note: RPL districted and registered tax parcels excluding utility lots and unsubdivided holdings (1983 05)

* Value less than 0.1

1 Land area of residential lots divided by the number of lots.

2 Only "arms length" land and structure sales are reported (1140 cases).

3 Includes both single detached and semi-detached dwellings.

One means used to regulate density specified in the Land Use Bylaw is a maximum measure of dwelling units per net hectare[12]. The average density for all RPL districted parcels, 27.3 du/ha, is approximately 65% of the allowable maximum density of 42 du/ha[13].

Some tax parcels currently districted RPL were subdivided and construction of dwellings begun in 1976 when the zero-lot-line experiments were undertaken. Early subdivision and construction activity also occurred in West Jasper Place and Kaskitayo, perhaps in anticipation of changes to the Land Use Bylaw since they were not initially districted RPL. The majority of subdivision and construction activity has occurred since 1980, primarily during 1981 in the Mill Woods ASP area.

Sales data[14], available only for sales at 'arms length' for the 1976 to 1983 time period, indicate that the average price for an RPL districted lot with single detached dwelling was $74,450. However, the average sale price ranges from a low of $63,050 in Millbourne to a high of $112,000 in Blue Quill. Clearly, there is substantial variation in both the size and/or quality of dwelling units constructed and the size, shape and location of the lots on which they are situated.

Of the 1,924 dwellings on properties districted RPL, approximately 17% (338) were unoccupied as of May 1983. Thirteen of these are residential show homes. Of those dwellings which are occupied, only 4% are rented. These dwellings range in size from one to four bedrooms although 72% have three bedrooms. Some of these dwellings were only partially finished with second bathrooms and bedrooms "roughed-in" when sold and this would explain some of the one bedroom dwellings.

Within these structures reside 4,763 persons, 78% of whom live in the Mill Woods or West Jasper Place ASP area. Twenty-seven percent of individuals are aged 14 or under (children) and 3% are aged 55 or more (older adults). The areas with the lowest proportion of children, Kaskitayo and Ottewell, have the highest proportion of older adults. Fifty-five percent of all households include children. For the city as a whole, 19% of the population is aged 14 or less, 15% are aged 55 or more and 45% of households include children. As expected, there is a higher than average proportion of children in RPL areas. The average number of persons per occupied dwelling unit in the RPL District regardless of dwelling type is 3.00.

4.2 Characteristics of Selected RPL Development Areas

In addition to reporting on the RPL Land Use District as a whole, six developments were selected to highlight the diverse characteristics of properties and the structures and persons resident thereon. The projects selected include a former church site in Dovercourt, two zero-lot-line concept developments in Ottewell and Millbourne, a project

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12 This measure is not specified for all districts. In the RF1 District it is not specified although assuming a minimum lot area of 360 m^2 the density would approximate 27.8 du/ha.

13 An average lot size of 238 m^2 would achieve 42 du/ha.

14 59% of all sales (1,140 of 1,924) were at 'arms length'; correction for inflation was not performed since the majority of sales occurred within the three year period from 1980-82.

TABLE 4.2.1 SELECTED PROPERTY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DISSIMILAR RPL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Selected Characteristics		Dovercourt	Ottawell	Millbourne	Blue Quill	Burnewood	Willowdale	All RPL Parcels
Number of Tax Parcels	#	9	156	49	64	945	345	2,810
Land Area of Tax Parcels	ha	0.3	5.2	1.4	2.6	33.3	12.7	102.9
Land Use:								
Single Detached	#	9	156	49	44	719	240	1,898
	ha	0.3	5.2	1.4	1.9	24.6	8.8	67.6
Semi-Detached	#	-	-	-	20	2	-	26
	ha	-	-	-	0.7	*	-	0.8
Undeveloped Land	#	-	-	-	-	224	105	886
	ha	-	-	-	-	8.7	3.9	34.3
City-Owned Tax Parcels	#	-	-	-	-	-	14	43
	ha	-	-	-	-	-	0.6	1.8
Average Tax Parcel Size								
Single Detached	m^2	308	336	277	432	343	366	356
Semi-Detached	m^2	-	-	-	355	235	-	345
Undeveloped Land	m^2	-	-	-	-	387	375	389
Proportion of Tax Parcels Greater than $360m^2$	%	11.1	31.4	14.2	51.6	29.5	40.8	38.3
Number of Dwellings per Net Hectare[1]	#	32.5	29.8	36.1	24.5	28.3	27.1	27.3
Subdivision Activity								
Start Year		1981	1977	1976	1978	1980	1977	1976
Peak Year		1981	1977	1976	1978	1981	1982	1981
Construction Activity								
Start Year		1982	1976	1976	1979	1981	1977	1976
Peak Year		1982	1977	1976	1979	1981	1982	1981
Average Sales Price Single Detached[2]	$	75,700	72,000	63,050	111,950	73,850	77,450	74,450
Number of Occupied Dwellings	#	9	154	46	50	565	205	1,586
Number of Unoccupied Dwellings	#	-	2	3	14	157	35	338
Proportion of Rental Households	%	11.1	9.1	23.9	12.0	2.7	2.9	4.0
Dwelling Size								
One Bedroom	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Two Bedroom	%	22.2	11.0	0.0	0.0	31.0	19.0	23.8
Three Bedroom	%	77.8	83.8	89.1	82.0	67.4	74.1	72.4
Four Bedroom	%	0.0	5.2	10.9	18.0	1.6	6.9	3.5
Number of Persons	#	17	415	151	153	1,624	636	4,763
Proportion of Persons Aged 14 or Less	%	0.0	22.2	27.2	19.0	26.5	29.4	27.6
Proportion of Persons Aged 55 or More	%	0.0	6.0	4.0	7.8	1.6	3.1	3.0
Proportion of Households with Children	%	0.0	46.1	65.2	44.0	49.0	60.0	54.9
Average Number of Persons per Dwelling Unit[3]		1.90	2.69	3.28	3.06	2.87	3.10	3.00

Note : RPL districted and registered tax parcels excluding utility lots and unsubdivided holdings (1983 05).
: * value less than 0.1
: 1 Potential dwellings calculated by the land area of residential lots divided by the number of lots.
: 2 Only "arms length" land and structure sales are reported (1140 cases).
: 3 includes both single and semi-detached dwellings.

with a mix of housing forms in Blue Quill, the Burnewood neighbourhood of Mill Woods representing the largest concentration of RPL lots, and the Willowdale neighbourhood of West Jasper Place to represent the west end housing market. Statistics for these areas are presented in Table 4.2.1.

Dovercourt is a small 9 lot development on a former church site in a Mature Suburban area of the city. Subdivided and built in 1981-82, the nine single detached dwellings are located on parcels with an average size of 308 m^2. The average sale price was $75,700. There were no children or older adults living here (as of May 1983) and the average number of persons per dwelling unit was only 1.90. Owing to its size and its location at the corner of a block, the scale of the project is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood despite a density of 32.5 dwellings per net hectare.

Millbourne is a zero-lot-line project comprised of 49 single detached dwellings in the Mill Woods ASP area. While there are no rear laneways, an interior service roadway provides access to the lots. The majority of dwellings have a carport which touches the adjoining dwelling and some parcels lack side yards. Subdivided and built in 1976, the average lot size of 277 m^2 achieves a comparatively high density of 35 du/ha. This development recorded the lowest average sale price ($63,050) of the developments selected for investigation. It also recorded the highest proportion of rental units, three bedroom dwellings, households with children and persons per dwelling unit (3.28) of the development areas selected.

Ottewell, a mature suburban area, is a zero-lot-line development comprised of 156 single detached dwellings located on the former site of a drive-in theatre. This project incorporates interior roadway and walkway systems and has an earth berm along 50th Street. Some dwellings have attached garages while others have carports the roofs of which are supported by the adjacent dwelling. Subdivision and construction activity started in 1976 although the 1976 plan of subdivision was later resubdivided in part to accommodate what was actually built. The single detached dwellings, a mixture of two, three and four bedroom units, are located on parcels with an average lot size of 336 m^2. These properties had an average sale price of $72,000. A greater than average number of older adults reside in this area which had an average number of persons per dwelling unit of 2.69 as of May 1983.

Blue Quill, a 64 lot development in the Kaskitayo ASP area, is quite different from the previous three areas. This project, built on four cul-de-sacs to provide privacy, includes a mix of bungalow, split level and two-storey single detached dwellings and large semi-detached dwellings. Some dwellings have a floor area of 2,000 sq. ft. and many have attached garages. This project gives the visual impression of large dwellings on small lots but the average lot area is a healthy 432 m^2, the largest of the developments investigated. Subdivided and built in 1978-79, these three and four bedroom dwellings recorded the highest average sale price at $112,000. There was a low proportion of children and the highest proportion of older adults in this area. The average number of persons per dwelling unit was 3.06.

Burnewood, the area containing the largest number of RPL districted parcels, is located in the Mill Woods ASP area. The developed portion of Burnewood is entirely districted RPL with the exception of a commercial site and two walk-up apartment sites. This differs from the 1979 Burnewood Neighbourhood Structure Plan which specified a number of semi-detached and row housing sites. Only two semi-detached dwelling units are located in Burnewood. Subdivision and construction activity began in 1980 and 224 parcels remain vacant. In addition, there are approximately 900 approved but unregistered RPL districted lots. Single detached dwellings, ranging in size from two to four bedrooms (a

significant proportion of which are two bedroom), are located on parcels with an average area of 343 m^2. Density, measured by dwellings per hectare, and the average sale price of $74,000 are close to the average for the RPL District as a whole. In addition to the large number of vacant parcels, this area has 157 unoccupied dwellings. Burnewood has a close to average proportion of children and an average of 2.87 persons per dwelling unit.

Willowdale, chosen to represent the west end housing market, includes parcels from three areas within the neighbourhood. Some of the dwellings have attached garages. Approximately one-third of these parcels remain vacant. The average lot area for this area is larger than the RPL District average. Subdivision and construction activity started in 1977. An assortment of two, three and four bedroom dwellings on above average sized parcels had the second highest average sale price at $77,500. This area also had the highest proportion of children and the second highest average persons per dwelling unit ratio at 3.10.

These six development areas highlight the diversity of RPL districted properties[15]. Development areas range in size from nine lots to a thousand. Site designs include the narrow sideyards regulated in the Land Use Bylaw and the zero-lot-line concept. Average lot areas range from 277 m^2 to 432 m^2 and average property sale prices range from $63,000 to $112,000. While the zero-lot-line development areas do not have rear laneways, they do have interior service roads. Bungalow, split-level and two and a half storey dwellings ranging from just over 800 ft^2 to 2,000 ft^2 of floorspace with carports or attached garages are located in this land use district. Individuals of all ages, although households tend towards those which include children, reside in these areas at densities of from 1.90 PPDU to 3.28. The 'small dwelling on a small lot' label would appear to be inappropriate for a significant proportion of properties in this land use district.

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15 These development areas were investigated for subdivision activity and vacant lots during the month of July, 1984.

5. UTILIZATION OF THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT IN PERSPECTIVE

In attempting to describe how the RPL Land Use District has been utilized, it is necessary to differentiate between properties created prior to the implementation of the district[16] and those created post-implementation. Prior to implementation, some experimental zero-lot-line projects were developed with provincial ministerial approval. The properties were developed with the specific objective of producing housing on small lots. These projects, encouraged primarily as learning experiences for the benefit of both the housing industry and government, did not significantly impact housing activities or prices. With the approval of Bylaw 5996, these developments were redistricted to the RPL Land Use District.

During 1981 and 1982 there was a flurry of subdivision and construction activity on RPL lands (Appendix B). During 1982, 31% of all single and semi-detached housing starts in the City of Edmonton occurred on properties districted RPL. More recently, the attractiveness of RPL development has diminished and there have been applications to redistrict properties from RPL to RF1[17]. To explain this short-lived popularity of the RPL district, it is important to review the factors which influenced the utilization of the district.

In the early 1980's, inflated land and housing prices combined with rising interest rates to price traditional single family dwellings beyond the affordability range of a large segment of potential home purchasers. At the same time, builders who pre-built housing were holding large inventories of both lots and dwelling units without a means of maintaining a balanced cash flow. In reaction to the housing affordability situation, the provincial government introduced a number of housing programs including the Alberta Family Home Purchase Program[18]. This program provided low interest loans of up to 90% of value for low and moderate income families who wanted to purchase a home (within specified price and floorspace limits) and for builders who wanted to build homes for sale to qualified purchasers. In addition, the Federal Canada Home Ownership Stimulation Program (which provided $3,000.00 grants to purchasers) stimulated demand for housing. The RPL Land Use District, which allows for flexible site design, was well suited to enable builders to provide housing which satisfied the house size and price limits of the programs, was affordable and appealed to first time home purchasers.

When economic growth in Alberta slowed, the popularity of the RPL Land Use District was substantially reduced. Declining lot and housing prices had the effect of making traditional single family dwellings on RF1 districted properties affordable (subject to interest rates). At the same time, the gap between prices for RPL and RF1 lots and housing has narrowed significantly to the point where the differences in carrying costs for the home purchaser are much less significant. The freezing of provincial housing programs removed the incentive to developers to continue to utilize the RPL district to provide moderately priced housing and removed the subsidy for potential home purchasers.

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16 Edmonton Land Use Bylaw #5996 effective July 3, 1980

17 1984 redistricting applications include 510 lots in Burnewood and 100 lots in Ogilvie Ridge. In both cases these lots were approved but not registered.

18 In 1981, provincial housing program activity accounted for approximately 50% (19,000) of the Province's 38,000 housing starts. In 1983, programs accounted for only 10% (1,650) of the province's 16,500 housing starts.

In addition, slow economic growth, declining in-migration and growing unemployment have lessened demand for housing.

In short, RPL development was principally undertaken as a reaction to a specific economic climate. Although in some cases, developers and builders may have utilized the RPL Land Use District to provide innovative housing, higher density or a unique housing project to satisfy a particular segment of demand, the general motivation was strictly economic.

Given the economic and demographic factors which fuelled the RPL phenomenon, the primary market for RPL housing was most probably first time home buyers, especially young couples or families, in search of affordable family oriented (i.e., ground oriented) housing in a suburban location. A secondary market would have consisted of older people attracted by the advantages of a small, well designed house as an alternative to a larger house on a 'full size lot'.

The evidence of this study suggests a large proportion of households in RPL dwellings consist of young couples, some with and some without children. Since most RPL housing was constructed and sold in 1981 and 1982, many of these home buyers would have just been settling into their new homes at the time of the 1983 Edmonton Civic Census. Conceivably, once settled, many young couples will begin to raise children or add to the number of children they already have. Should this occur to any substantial degree, the result would be a noticeable increase in average household sizes and consequently a marked increase in demand for facilities and services required by young children and their parents.

6. FUTURE ROLE OF THE RPL LAND USE DISTRICT

Given the period of pronounced utilization followed by a period of declining use, all during the short time since the implementation of this land use district, it is difficult to predict the future role of the district. If the short-lived popularity of the district was the result of prohibitive housing costs and market intervention in the form of provincial housing programs, then it is likely that minimal use will be made of the RPL district in the absence of these factors. However, a number of applications for the RPL District can be identified.

The district may be used to provide single family detached dwellings on narrow lots. The housing product would probably (although not necessarily) be at the lower end of the single family detached dwelling price range and be in competition with town housing and condominium apartments. Housing of this nature would appeal to a small segment of potential home purchasers and would probably be located in suburban areas of the city.

The district may also be used to provide innovative housing. While it may initially appear that innovative single family housing would appeal to a rather narrow market, the flexibility in site design and potential mixing of housing forms allowed in the RPL District could enable the development of saleable innovative housing projects.

The district may be used as an alternative land use district for the development of parcels of land with a non-traditional shape. The RPL District permits innovative lot configuration and roadway patterns which allow maximum use of land parcels that are not rectangular in shape. There are examples of this approach in the Fraser neighbourhood of Clareview and the Blue Quill neighbourhood of Kaskitayo.

The district may be a useful alternative for the development of the bulb of cul-de-sacs and some locations along curved streets permitting narrow lot frontage parcels with larger than minimum total lot areas. The minimal lot frontage requirements for this district allow for innovative lot design adjacent to non-linear roadways.

The district may be used for infill projects where subdivision of the properties is required and where less than 40 foot frontages are desired to better conform with the narrow lot configuration of the surrounding properties. This would permit development of housing densities similar to the existing density.

This district may be used during inflationary economic periods to permit construction of small homes on small lots which would be affordable and satisfy an existing housing demand. Hence this district may be seldom utilized during periods of economic stability.

Clearly, the history of the RPL Land Use District is quite short relative to other low density land use districts. The process of learning how to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the RPL District will continue to require time and experience. The stage of photo-reduction of traditional single family dwelling designs has passed and a more innovative learning stage of matching housing forms to non-traditional lots and the marketing of these products is underway. Time is also required to learn how to effectively market the product to potential home purchaser target groups.

For more than a decade, some of the pundits on the Canadian housing industry have predicted that in the future, housing affordability, or the lack thereof, will result in smaller homes, smaller lots and better features built into the house. The 'RPL experience' to date in Edmonton does not appear to substantiate this prediction; rather than a sustained reaction to a general economic trend, it has been a short lived reaction to a set of short-term economic circumstances. If, however, their long term forecast of a move towards more efficient housing is correct, the RPL Land Use District would certainly be one of the mechanisms available to enable this adjustment in the housing industry.

APPENDIX A

Excerpts From the Edmonton Land Use Bylaw #5996
Section 130: RPL Planned Lot Residential District

130.1 General Purpose

To provide a district primarily for Single Detached Housing that provides greater flexibility of site design on a planned basis, with some provision for Semi-detached and Row Housing.

130.2 Permitted Uses

1) Single Detached Housing
2) Limited Group Homes

130.3 Discretionary Uses

1) Semi-detached Housing
2) Row Housing, including Linked Housing, containing not more than 4 dwellings per building
3) Homecrafts
4) Office-in-the-Home
5) Group Homes
6) Foster Homes
7) Daytime Child Care Services
8) Residential Sales Centre

130.4 Development Regulations for Permitted and Discretionary Uses

The following regulations shall apply to Permitted and Discretionary Uses, except where altered by a Statutory Plan Overlay:

1) The maximum net density shall be 42 dwellings/ha (17.0 dwellings/acre).

2) The maximum height shall not exceed 10 m (32.8 feet) nor 2½ storeys.

3) The maximum total site coverage shall not exceed 45%, with a maximum of 35% for a principal building, and a maximum of 15% for accessory buildings. Where a garage is attached to or designed as an integral part of a dwelling, the maximum for the principal building shall be 45%.

4) The Development Officer shall not approve an application, or a group of simultaneous applications, for a development permit, unless at least 50% of the dwellings are Single Detached Dwellings and not more than 25% of the dwellings are Row Housing Dwellings.

5) Each dwelling shall be located on a lot having frontage on a public roadway other than a lane, and each lot shall be under separate title or be capable of being registered under separate title.

13) Where several development applications are received simultaneously, the Development Officer shall require the submission of site plans showing setbacks, dwelling entrances and orientation, massing, roof lines, the location of windows and other opening in walls and elevational treatment of wall openings and finishing materials for all of the developments. The Development Officer shall require that the exteriors of the dwellings which are the subject of the applications provide individuality and variety of building design in terms of setbacks, entrances, elevations and finishing materials.

14) The minimum site width for each lot shall be:

a) 7.5 m (24.5 ft.) for each Single Detached Dwelling or Semi-detached Dwelling;

b) 6.0 m (19.7 ft.) for each Row Housing end Dwelling which is not a Semi-detached Dwelling; and

c) 5.0 m (16.4 ft.) for each Row Housing internal Dwelling.

APPENDIX B

Selected Housing Activity Indicators for the City of Edmonton

Indicator	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Population[1]	491,359	505,773	521,205	551,314*	560,085
Growth Rate	2.8	2.9	3.0	5.8	1.6
Conventional Mortgage Interest Rate[2]	11.97	14.32	18.15ϕ	17.89	14.40
Residential Building Permits[3] - S & SD[4]	4,431	3,346	4,310	2,200	2,536
- Total	8,871	7,464	12,021+	8,161	4,026
Housing Starts					
- S & SD	4,138	3,191	4,046	1,811	3,003
- Total	9,682	8,446	10,515	9,111	5,056
Housing Completions[5]	12,641	8,176	9,641	9,546	7,761
RPL Districted Lots[6]					
Lots Subdivided	130	483	1,136	721	-
Dwellings Constructed	75	30	849	562	-
RPL Dwellings Constructed as a % of S & SD Starts (annually)[7]	1.8	0.9	21.0	31.0	-

Notes:
1. City of Edmonton Civic Census
2. Bank of Canada Review
3. City of Edmonton Planning Department
4. Single Detached, Semi-Detached and Duplexes
5. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
6. Approved and registered tax parcels
7. RPL dwellings constructed divided by total single detached, semi-detached and duplex housing starts (annual)

ϕ Mortgage interest rates exceeded 20.0% from August to October, 1981

\+ With the impending cancellation of the federal MURB tax shelter program (December 31, 1981) many builders obtained permits, a portion of which were not acted upon.

* Approximately 9,000 persons were added to the census as the result of the January 1, 1982 annexation decision

\- Data not available for whole year

APPENDIX C

MINIMUM SITE DIMENSIONS AND AREAS

LAND USE DISTRICT	MINIMUM SITE WIDTH	MINIMUM SITE DEPTH	MINIMUM SITE AREA
RF1	12 m (39.4 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	360 m2 (3,875 sq. ft.)
RF2	Single Detached Dwelling 12 m (39.4 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	360 m2 (3,875 sq. ft.)
	Semi-Detached Dwelling or Duplex 7.5 m (24.6 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	300 m2 (3,229 sq. ft.)
RF3	Single Detached Dwelling 12 m (39.4 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	360 m2 (3,875 sq. ft.)
	Semi-Detached Dwelling or Duplex 7.5 m (24.6 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	300 m2 (3,229 sq. ft.)
	Row Housing End Dwelling 6.0 m (19.7 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	200 m2 (2,153 sq. ft.)
	Row Housing Internal Dwelling 5.0 m (16.4 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	150 m2 (1,615 sq. ft.)
RF4	Single Detached Dwelling 12 m (39.4 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	360 m2 (3,875 sq. ft.)
	Semi-Detached Dwelling or Duplex 7.5 m (24.6 ft.)	30 m (98.4 ft.)	300 m2 (3,229 sq. ft.)
RPL	Single Detached or Semi-Detached Dwelling 7.5 m (24.6 ft.)	*	*
	Row Housing End Dwelling 6.0 m (19.7 ft.)	*	*
	Row Housing Internal Dwelling 5.0 m (16.4 ft.)	*	*

Notes: Source - Edmonton Land Use Bylaw #5996

: * not specified by the Bylaw

: Section 51.2(1)c states that a development permit cannot be refused, irrespective of the District, for a Single Detached Dwelling on a site with a width at least 10 m (32.8 ft.) and a depth at least 30 m (98.4 ft.)